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New Survey Reveals Unique Habits and Preferences of Next Generation Travelers

Technological change has reinvented the manner in which travel service suppliers bring their products and services to the marketplace in recent years, and a new survey now reveals that emerging technology has had an equally profound effect on the behavior of those who use it.

The NEXTgen Traveler(TM) survey of 2,559 adults-co-authored by PhoCusWright and Ypartnership -was conducted in March 2008. Respondents were "active users" of the latest computer, entertainment or consumer technology, and took at least one overnight trip requiring the use of commercial accommodations during the previous 12 months.

According to the survey, these "next generation" travelers are highly educated (30% with a 4-year college degree, 20% with at least one year of graduate school), affluent (30% of households with an annual income in excess of \$100,000), and are equally likely to be Echo Boomers (18-28 years of age) as Baby Boomers (43 to 61 years of age), thereby debunking the belief that the usage of new technology is concentrated among younger travelers. They have a zest for travel (75% would travel more if they had more money, 62% would travel more if they had more time) and spend, on average, over 50% more on travel services annually than their less tech-savvy counterparts.

"The data paint a fascinating picture of the manner in which emerging technology has re-shaped the attitudes and behavior of contemporary travelers," said Philip C. Wolf, President and CEO of PhoCusWright. "And it is clear that tech-savvy travelers display a significantly different market profile than travelers who are less wired."

As expected, "next generation" travelers are heavy users of the latest technology: two thirds (65%) take pictures, text message (63%), access the Internet (33%) and play video games (29%) with their phones. Two thirds also shop online sites such as eBay (67%). Four out of ten (37%) own the latest video game console, and one out of four (23%) has a GPS in their car.

"Next generation" travelers also rely heavily on the Internet when it comes to planning, purchasing and sharing information on travel experiences:

- Seven out of ten (71%) use the Internet to search for travel information, while 41% have taken a virtual tour of a destination, and 38% have built a trip itinerary online,

- More than half (58%) cite the "ability to check the best fares/rates" as the most important feature in a travel Web site,

- Almost four in ten (37%) report being influenced by personal comments read on social networking or travel advisory Web sites, but they frequent social networking sites such as MySpace.com (56%) and Facebook

purpose of The NEXTgen Traveler™ study was to learn about their preferences, ownership and use related to: entertainment and computer hardware and software; the Internet, social networks and Web 2.0 features; lifestyle and media habits. In particular, the survey probed consumers' travel behaviors, intentions, aspirations and budget, thus allowing overall technology savviness to be intersected with travel-related characteristics. This resulted in a thorough view of the NEXTgen traveler across all aspects of the travel value chain, including searching, shopping and buying.

This report presents key findings from The NEXTgen Traveler™ study. It identifies important aspects of the NEXTgen traveler such as:

- Channels used for shopping and purchasing travel
- Influences affecting travel purchase decisions
- Activities performed through the Internet, mobile devices and other technologies
- Social media Web sites – and functionalities - used
- Media choices

Purchase The NEXTgen Traveler™ today – get to know this important demographic and stay ahead of your competition.

[Report Overview](#) [Table of Contents](#) [Methodology](#)

REPORT OVERVIEW

[^top](#)

The purpose of The NEXTgen Traveler™ study was to learn about their preferences, ownership and use related to: entertainment and computer hardware and software; the Internet, social networks and Web 2.0 features; lifestyle and media habits. In particular, the survey probed consumers' travel behaviors, intentions, aspirations and budget, thus allowing overall technology savviness to be intersected with travel-related characteristics. This resulted in a thorough view of the NEXTgen traveler across all aspects of the travel value chain, including searching, shopping and buying. Key findings from this research are presented in this report.

A confluence of factors has supported the recent shift to online travel shopping and buying, such as supplier distribution strategies and low price availability. But, it took life-changing technological advances – broadband Internet connectivity, user-friendly interfaces, faster and more accurate search engines – to make the Internet the number one travel resource for most NEXTgen travelers next to friends and family⁽³⁾. A finding from this research is that the more time NEXTgen Americans spend online, the more often they would read about travel and be influenced by what they read. Next to email and downloading music and video, searching for travel information is the third most popular Internet pastime for NEXTgen travelers⁽⁴⁾. There is now a segment of the population that is so comfortable with technology that it's routine and expected in most areas of life – especially throughout the travel process.

Considering that age could be a huge factor related to technology usage and other behaviors, the survey oversampled college students to ensure a large enough base for analysis. As a subset of the overall findings in this report, Ypartnership and PhoCusWright highlight the differences between college students vs. non-college students. Other subset analyses in this report include gender and income.

While the size of your television screen or social network, or your use of the latest technology

gadgets may not determine how you travel or even how much you travel, it does impact where trustworthy and convenient travel information is derived. NEXTgen travelers seek out travel information and interact with travel providers in new and unique ways. Points of influence have changed for anyone who embraces technology. Only in understanding these touchpoints can marketers communicate effectively with NEXTgen travelers across all ages and lifestyles.

⁽¹⁾Source: PhoCusWright Inc.

⁽²⁾Have taken a trip of at least 75 miles from home during the last twelve months that required paid overnight accommodations

⁽³⁾Source: The NEXTgen Traveler™

⁽⁴⁾Source: The NEXTgen Traveler™

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[^top](#)

Section 1: Entertainment Technologies Preferences and Use

Section 2: Social Networking/Online Communities Participation And Preferences

Section 3: Technology Hardware Preferences and Ownership

Section 4: Travel Specific Use Of The Internet

Section 5: Travel Habits, Intentions, Aspirations And Budget

Section 6: Lifestyle And General Consumer Behavior

Section 7: Media Habits

Section 8: Demography

LIST OF TABLES

Section 1: Entertainment Technologies Preferences and Use

Table 1.1 Play Video Games

Table 1.2 Play Video Games, By Education

Table 1.3 Play Video Games, By Income

Table 1.4 Medium Used To Play Video Games

Table 1.5 Medium Used To Play Video Games, by Student Status

Table 1.6 Medium Used To Play Video Games, by Gender

Table 1.7 Number Of Hours Per Week Spent Playing Video Games

Table 1.8 Number Of Hours Per Week Spent Playing Video Games, By Gender

Table 1.9 Number Of Hours Per Week Spent Playing Video Games, By Income

Table 1.10 Downloaded Or Streamed Rich Media Onto Computer Or Other Device

Table 1.11 Downloaded Or Streamed Rich Media Onto Computer Or Other Device, By Student Status

Table 1.12 Downloaded Or Streamed Rich Media Onto Computer Or Other Device, By Gender

Table 1.13 Uploaded Videos To Web Sites

Table 1.14 Uploaded Videos To Web Sites, By Student Status

Table 1.15 Uploaded Videos To Web Sites, By Income

Table 1.16 Stored, Edited Or Organized Digital Photos With Your Computer Or The Internet

Table 1.17 Stored, Edited Or Organized Digital Photos With Your Computer Or The Internet, By Gender

Table 1.18 Stored, Edited Or Organized Digital Photos With Your Computer Or The Internet, By Income

Section 2: Social Networking/Online Communities Participation And Preferences

Table 2.1 Social Networking, Sharing Or Community Oriented Sites Regularly Visited

Table 2.2 Social Networking, Sharing Or Community Oriented Sites Regularly Visited, By Student Status

Table 2.3 Social Networking, Sharing Or Community Oriented Sites Regularly Visited, By Gender

Table 2.4 Social Networking, Sharing Or Community Oriented Sites Regularly Visited, By Income

Table 2.5 Types Of Reviews Written On Social Networking, Sharing Or Community Oriented Sites

Table 2.6 Types Of Reviews Written On Social Networking, Sharing Or Community Oriented Sites, By Student Status

Table 2.7 Types Of Reviews Written On Social Networking, Sharing Or Community Oriented Sites, By Gender

Table 2.8 Have Programmed/Created A Web Site

Table 2.9 Have Programmed/Created A Web Site, By Student Status

Table 2.10 Have Programmed/Created A Web Site, By Gender

Table 2.11 Have Used An API (Application Programming Interface)

Table 2.12 Have Used An API (Application Programming Interface), By Gender

Section 3: Technology Hardware Preferences and Ownership

Table 3.1 Ownership Of Technology

Table 3.2 Ownership Of Technology, By Student Status

Table 3.3 Ownership Of Technology, By Gender

Table 3.4 Ownership Of Technology, By Income

Table 3.5 Cell Phone Usage

Table 3.6 Cell Phone Usage, By Student Status

Table 3.7 Cell Phone Usage, By Gender

Table 3.8 Cell Phone Usage, By Income

Table 3.9 Number Of Televisions

Table 3.10 Number Of Televisions, By Student Status

Table 3.11 Number Of Televisions, By Income

Table 3.12 Screen Size Of Primary Television

Table 3.13 Screen Size Of Primary Television, By Student Status

Table 3.14 Screen Size Of Primary Television, By Income

Table 3.15 Television Usage

Table 3.16 Television Usage, By Student Status

Table 3.17 Television Usage, By Gender

Table 3.18 Television Usage, By Income

Table 3.19 Television Service Subscriptions

Table 3.20 Television Service Subscriptions, By Student Status

Table 3.21 Television Service Subscriptions, By Gender

Table 3.22 Television Service Subscriptions, By Income

Table 3.23 Television Services Watched While Traveling

Table 3.24 Television Services Watched While Traveling, By Student Status

Table 3.25 Television Services Watched While Traveling, By Gender

Table 3.26 Radio Service Subscriptions

Table 3.27 Radio Service Subscriptions, By Student Status

Table 3.28 Radio Service Subscriptions, By Gender

Table 3.29 Radio Service Subscriptions, By Income

Section 4: Travel Specific Use Of The Internet

Table 4.1 Internet Usage

Table 4.2 Internet Usage, By Student Status

Table 4.3 Internet Usage, By Gender

Table 4.4 Internet Usage, By Income

Table 4.5 Number Of Leisure Trips In Which The Internet Or An Online Service Was Used To Obtain Information About Travel Services Or Suppliers

Table 4.6 Number Of Leisure Trips In Which The Internet Or An Online Service Was Used To Obtain Information About Travel Services Or Suppliers, By Income

Table 4.7 Number Of Leisure Trips In Which The Internet Or An Online Service Was Used To Read User Reviews About Travel

Table 4.8 Number of Leisure Trips In Which The Internet Or An Online Service Was Used To Book A Travel Reservation

Table 4.9 Number of Leisure Trips In Which The Internet Or An Online Service Was Used To Book A Travel Reservation, By Student Status

Table 4.10 Web Sites Used To Obtain Travel Information And Prices And/Or Read User Reviews About Travel

Table 4.11 Web Sites Used To Obtain Travel Information And Prices And/Or Read User Reviews About Travel, By Student Status

Table 4.12 Web Sites Used To Obtain Travel Information And Prices And/Or Read User Reviews About Travel, By Gender

Table 4.13 Web Sites Used To Obtain Travel Information And Prices And/Or Read User Reviews About Travel, By Income

Table 4.14 Influence Of Sources Of Information When Making Decisions About Travel Destinations Or Services

Table 4.15 Influence Of Sources Of Information When Making Decisions About Travel Destinations Or Services, By Gender

Table 4.16 Search Engines Used When Planning Leisure Trips

Table 4.17 Search Engines Used When Planning Leisure Trips, By Student Status

Table 4.18 Search Engines Used When Planning Leisure Trips, By Gender

Table 4.19 Search Engines Used When Planning Leisure Trips, By Income

Table 4.20 Influence Of Travel Web Site Features When Making Decisions About Travel Destinations Or Services

Table 4.21 Influence Of Travel Web Site Features When Making Decisions About Travel Destinations Or Services, By Student Status

Table 4.22 Influence Of Travel Web Site Features When Making Decisions About Travel Destinations Or Services, By Gender

Table 4.23 Influence Of Travel Web Site Features When Making Decisions About Travel Destinations Or Services, By Income

Table 4.24 Use Of Social Networking, Blogging, Tagging Or Travel Sites For Travel Planning

Section 5: Travel Habits, Intentions, Aspirations And Budget

Table 5.1 Annual Travel Expenditures

Table 5.2 Annual Travel Expenditures, By Student Status

Table 5.3 Annual Travel Expenditures, By Income

Table 5.4 Online vs. Offline Travel Expenditures

Table 5.5 Primary Purpose Of Leisure Trips

Table 5.6 Primary Purpose Of Leisure Trips, By Student Status

Table 5.7 Primary Purpose Of Leisure Trips, By Gender

Table 5.8 Primary Purpose Of Leisure Trips, By Income

Table 5.9 Leisure Trip Party Composition

Table 5.10 Leisure Trip Party Composition, By Student Status

Table 5.11 Leisure Trip Party Composition, By Gender

Table 5.12 Leisure Trip Party Composition, By Income

Table 5.13 Seasons Leisure Trips Are Primarily Taken

Table 5.14 Seasons Leisure Trips Are Primarily Taken, By Student Status

Table 5.15 Seasons Leisure Trips Are Primarily Taken, By Gender

Table 5.16 Seasons Leisure Trips Are Primarily Taken, By Income

Table 5.17 Domestic vs. International Leisure Trips

Table 5.18 Domestic vs. International Leisure Trips, By Student Status

Table 5.19 Domestic vs. International Leisure Trips, By Gender

Table 5.20 Domestic vs. International Leisure Trips, By Income

Table 5.21 Length Of Leisure Trips

Table 5.22 Length Of Leisure Trips, By Gender

Table 5.23 Length Of Leisure Trips, By Income

Table 5.24 Sources Used When Booking A Leisure Trip

Table 5.25 Sources Used When Booking A Leisure Trip, By Student Status

Table 5.26 Sources Used When Booking A Leisure Trip, By Gender

Table 5.27 Sources Used When Booking A Leisure Trip, By Income

Table 5.28 Preferred Payment Types

Table 5.29 Preferred Payment Types, By Student Status

Table 5.30 Preferred Payment Types, By Gender
Table 5.31 Preferred Payment Types, By Income
Table 5.32 Preferred Payment Cards
Table 5.33 Preferred Payment Cards, By Student Status
Table 5.34 Preferred Payment Cards, By Gender
Table 5.35 Preferred Payment Cards, By Income
Table 5.36 Primary Accommodation Type
Table 5.37 Primary Accommodation Type, By Student Status
Table 5.38 Primary Accommodation Type, By Gender
Table 5.39 Primary Accommodation Type, By Income
Table 5.40 Purchase Of A Pre-Packaged Tour
Table 5.41 Purchase Of A Pre-Packaged Tour, By Student Status
Table 5.42 Importance Of Hotel And Resort Amenities
Table 5.43 Importance Of Hotel And Resort Amenities, By Student Status
Table 5.44 Importance Of Hotel And Resort Amenities, By Gender
Table 5.45 Importance Of Hotel And Resort Amenities, By Income
Table 5.46 Preferred Hotel Brands
Table 5.47 Preferred Hotel Brands, By Student Status
Table 5.48 Preferred Hotel Brands, By Gender
Table 5.49 Preferred Hotel Brands, By Income
Table 5.50 Preferred Airline Brands
Table 5.51 Preferred Airline Brands, By Student Status
Table 5.52 Preferred Airline Brands, By Gender
Table 5.53 Preferred Airline Brands, By Income
Table 5.54 Preferred Cruise Line Brands
Table 5.55 Preferred Cruise Line Brands, By Student Status
Table 5.56 Preferred Cruise Line Brands, By Gender
Table 5.57 Preferred Cruise Line Brands, By Income
Table 5.58 Preferred Car Rental Brands
Table 5.59 Preferred Car Rental Brands, By Student Status
Table 5.60 Preferred Car Rental Brands, By Gender
Table 5.61 Preferred Car Rental Brands, By Income
Table 5.62 Membership In Loyalty Programs
Table 5.63 Membership In Loyalty Programs, By Student Status
Table 5.64 Membership In Loyalty Programs, By Gender
Table 5.65 Membership In Loyalty Programs, By Income
Table 5.66 Number Of Leisure Trips Taken During The Past 12 Months
Table 5.67 Number Of Leisure Trips Planned During The Next 12 Months
Table 5.68 Number Of Leisure Trips Planned During The Next 12 Months, By Income
Table 5.69 Number Of Leisure Trips Planned This Year Compared To Last Year
Table 5.70 Number Of Leisure Trips Planned This Year Compared To Last Year, By Student Status
Table 5.71 Primary Reason For Taking Fewer Leisure Trips
Table 5.72 Primary Reason For Taking Fewer Leisure Trips, By Student Status
Table 5.73 Primary Reason For Taking Fewer Leisure Trips, By Income

Section 6: Lifestyle And General Consumer Behavior

Table 6.1 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Environment
Table 6.2 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Environment, By Student Status
Table 6.3 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Control

Table 6.4 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Control, By Student Status

Table 6.5 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Control, By Gender

Table 6.6 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Stress

Table 6.7 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Stress, By Student Status

Table 6.8 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Stress, By Gender

Table 6.9 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Self-Invention

Table 6.10 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Self-Invention, By Student Status

Table 6.11 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Self-Invention, By Gender

Table 6.12 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Experientialism

Table 6.13 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Experientialism, By Student Status

Table 6.14 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Experientialism, By Gender

Table 6.15 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Vacation

Table 6.16 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Vacation, By Student Status

Table 6.17 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Vacation, By Gender

Table 6.18 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Vacation, By Income

Table 6.19 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Risk Tendency

Table 6.20 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Risk Tendency, By Student Status

Table 6.21 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Risk Tendency, By Gender

Table 6.22 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Technology

Table 6.23 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Technology, By Student Status

Table 6.24 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Technology, By Gender

Table 6.25 Agreement With Lifestyle-Related Attributes: Technology, By Income

Table 6.26 Interest In Niche Activities

Table 6.27 Interest In Niche Activities, By Student Status

Table 6.28 Interest In Niche Activities, By Gender

Table 6.29 Interest In Niche Activities, By Income

Section 7: Media Habits

Table 7.1 Readership Of Hard-Copy Newspaper

Table 7.2 Readership Of Hard-Copy Newspaper, By Student Status

Table 7.3 Readership Of Hard-Copy Newspaper, By Income

Table 7.4 Readership Of The Sunday Travel Section

Table 7.5 Readership Of The Sunday Travel Section, By Student Status

Table 7.6 Readership Of Online Newspapers

Table 7.7 Readership Of Online Newspapers, By Student Status

Table 7.8 Readership Of Online Newspapers, By Gender

Table 7.9 Magazines Read On A Regular Basis

Table 7.10 Magazines Read On A Regular Basis, By Student Status

Table 7.11 Magazines Read On A Regular Basis, By Gender

Table 7.12 Magazines Read On A Regular Basis, By Income

Table 7.13 Cable Networks Watched On A Regular Basis

Table 7.14 Cable Networks Watched On A Regular Basis, By Student Status

Table 7.15 Cable Networks Watched On A Regular Basis, By Gender

Table 7.16 Cable Networks Watched On A Regular Basis, By Income

Table 7.17 Types Of Music Listened To On A Regular Basis

Table 7.18 Types Of Music Listened To On A Regular Basis, By Student Status

Table 7.19 Types Of Music Listened To On A Regular Basis, By Gender

Table 7.20 Types Of Music Listened To On A Regular Basis, By Income

Section 8: Demography

Table 8.1 Demography

METHODOLOGY

[^top](#)

The NEXTgen Traveler™ information was obtained from an online panel of consumers who are nationally representative of U.S. households. A total of 2,559 consumers were involved in this database, including an over-sample of traditional college students. The data in this report have been collected during March 2008.

Screeners and Quota

- 50/50 gender split
- Over sample of traditional full-time college students
- Have taken a leisure trip of at least 75 miles from home during the last twelve months that required paid overnight accommodations
- Are familiar with the latest entertainment, computer, or consumer technology
- Active users of the latest entertainment, computer, or consumer technology
- Frequent users of the latest entertainment, computer, or consumer technology

The data presented in this report is weighted to account for the over-sample of college students. Unweighted data is only utilized to analyze the difference between college student and those who are not college students. Additionally, data in tables comparing groups is only presented for particular attributes if there is a significant difference between groups.

The margin of error for this report is $\pm 1.94\%$.